

Ink to Impress by 14winters

Series: [Better Than Eggos \[2\]](#)

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

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Relationships: Jonathan Byers/Steve Harrington/Nancy Wheeler

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Summary:

Steve gets a tattoo to impress the front desk receptionist at the local tattoo parlor.

Ink to Impress

Author's Note:

The year is 2016. Nancy is 19 years old and works two jobs to save up to move out of her parents' house – as a server at IHOP and a front desk receptionist at a tattoo parlor ([I found a page with someone with that job describing what it entails](#); I've known two people with such a job but not enough to actually talk to them about it, so I used Google). Steve and Jonathan are 20 and 19 respectively, and go to the community college nearby.

In response to a prompt sent to me on tumblr by [pokeasleepingsmaug](#), specifically for my modern AU: *For the IHOP AU, which of the boys would be the first to get a tattoo to impress Nancy, or even just for an excuse to see her when she's not working at IHOP?*

Nancy took the form from him, not even bothering to hide the smirk on her face.

"I'm impressed," she said, looking at him through her lashes.

"You are?" Steve couldn't help glancing at her lips. She wore a dark red lipstick, heavy mascara bringing out the bright blue of her eyes.

Standing in front of the tattoo parlor's desk, Nancy set the form aside, folded her arms, leaned back. "Yeah, not many guys would get a tattoo for a girl they're not even dating," she said, tilting her head, studying him. The laughter in her eyes somehow told him she wasn't mocking him. It was a certain humor she always expressed around him. And Jonathan. It was teasing, but without malice. His heart beat faster seeing the familiar glint of laughter.

Steve folded his arms, mirroring her. "Well, that's still up for debate, as I understand. You haven't exactly said no," he said, raising one eyebrow.

“True.” She looked off to the side, her smirk easing into a soft smile. Then her gaze slide down his body, and slowly back up to meet his eyes. There was something behind her laughing eyes, dark and flirtatious. He still couldn’t figure out what to make of it.

“So why a wolf?”

It took a second to process her words. But now it was his turn to smirk. He leaned slightly toward her.

“Well, you know, wolves mate for life,” he said, lowering his voice. Even though there were no other customers in the parlor at the moment.

Her laughter rang out, high and gleeful. “You’re a cliché, you know that right?”

“You still wanna go out with me though,” he said, feigning nonchalance.

She unfolded her arms. Walked back behind the desk, avoiding his eyes. “Eventually. I have to talk to Jonathan first,” she said, her tone light.

His mouth went dry. “Why?” He expected to feel angry, but he didn’t. He couldn’t acknowledge the anticipation that immediately rose in him at the mention of the other man. And his [stupid comments](#) on his Instagram account. And his ridiculous hair.

“You know you want to go out with him, too.”

She was looking at him through her lashes again. Her expression was almost blank, but there was a different sort of question in her eyes. He didn’t have an answer.

“I have no idea what you’re talking about,” he said, looking away, running a hand through his hair.

She was still looking at him, thoughtful, impassive. Then the tattoo artist, a tall man with a goatee, walked in.

“Steve? I’m ready for you.”

Steve shook off his nerves, having nothing to do with the tattoo he was about to get, and walked forward.

“Go get your tattoo, bad boy,” Nancy whispered as he walked past, and her fingers brushed his arm. He looked back at her. Her eyes crinkled with her smile. She winked at him.

Author's Note:

Steve has some nerve calling Jonathan's hair ridiculous doesn't he.